

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Lowell M. Porter



Captain Jeff Devere
Government and Media Relations
(360) 753-5299 – office
(360) 753-5469 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

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Contact: Missing & Exploited Children Task Force, Detective Sergeant John Didion

Phone: (360) 753-0315, ext. 105

"Increase in Children Recovered"

The Missing & Exploited Children Task Force (MECTF) is a multi-agency task force that assists law enforcement, state agencies, and custodial parents or legal guardians by conducting investigations on missing, abducted, and exploited children. Currently the task force is made up of one Washington State Patrol (WSP) Sergeant, one WSP detective, one Lacey Police Department detective, one Port Orchard Police Department detective and one clerical support person.

Since its inception in September of 1999, MECTF has received 262 requests for assistance. The task force responded to 193 calls for service and opened 34 new cases in 2004. The open cases included abduction cases, sexual exploitation cases, custodial interference cases, runaway cases, and other exploitation of children cases. The 34 investigations resulted in the recovery and location of ten children. The task force served 36 warrants in 2004, a 157 percent increase in comparison to the previous year, and submitted 16 cases to the prosecutor's office for criminal charges.

Moreover, the task force provided training on missing/exploited children issues to 749 participants in 26 training sessions in 2004; a 50 percent increase in comparison to the previous year.

The MECTF annual report which outlines, in detail, the work of the task force in 2004 can be viewed and downloaded by visiting the WSP website at <http://www.wsp.wa.gov/missing/aboutus.htm>.

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